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Fundraiser for premature babies

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Page 1 of 1

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By Anna Christian

Weighing a healthy 3.3kg and being a quiet baby, Ava was the perfect first child for Brianna Liebelt and her husband Bernie.

The couple joked their next child was going to be much tougher to handle – “a screamer or something” – and they were right.

During their second pregnancy Brianna’s waters ruptured at 18 weeks and she spent several weeks in hospital before baby Archie was born prematurely at 26 weeks, weighing just 950g.

Archie spent 105 days in hospital and will be attached to an oxygen tank for at least the first six months of his life.

The family of four will take part in a Walk for Prems event this month to raise money and awareness for the strain on families with premature babies.

Ms Liebelt said she felt she should give back to the Little Treasures Foundation, which runs the event, because of the help they gave to relieve some of her family’s stress.

“We got a booklet of information which had all the terminology in it, which was really helpful because you get all these doctors telling you lovely words that you don’t know then when we got home we could read about them and understand,” she said.

A glimmer of light

“Because Archie was born around Easter he got to be in a photo shoot with a little Peter Rabbit doll, it was the same size as him and it put light in a dull situation.”

The foundation also provides fuel vouchers, accommodation and food assistance for families visiting their babies in hospital, particularly from regional areas.

A 24-hour phone support line is provided by the foundation, which Ms Liebelt said helped her to connect with other support services.

“They’re women who you can really relate to as well rather than like when you’re calling Telstra,” Ms Liebelt said.

“They were a great place to go to find other services like the breastfeeding support line.

“I also found it very intimidating and daunting going to parent groups because you think ‘do



I want to hear everyone else’s stories?’ but I would absolutely recommend to get help even if it’s just someone to talk to.”

The family’s original goal was to raise \$800 for the foundation, but the figure has already passed \$4000 and 20 family members and friends will be joining them for the walk.

Walk for Prems will follow a 3km route in Adelaide on October 27 and aims to raise \$350,000 across Australia to support the 48,000 premature babies born each year.

Ms Liebelt said, as Archie had four blood transfusions, she was planning to do a blood drive to help premature babies next year.

Woodside mother Brianna Liebelt with 2-year-old Ava and 5-month-old Archie, who was born premature at 26 weeks, will be walking to raise money and awareness for families with premature babies.